

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are all the claims pending in the application, claims 3, 5-10, 12 and 13 of which are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakuma (US SIR H1201) in view of Hosoi et al. (US Patent No. 4,880,987) and Verbeke et al (US Patent No. 5,519,229). In addition, the drawings are objected to.

The Objection to the Drawings

Regarding the objection to the drawings stated in item 4 of the present Office Action, Applicants propose to cancel reference numeral 10 from Fig. 2. A "Request for Approval of Proposed Drawing Corrections" is enclosed.

The Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Fig. 1 of the present application shows an exemplary embodiment of a radiation image storage panel 500 having a transparent substrate 50a, a stimuable phosphor layer 50b, a back surface 50c, and a front surface 50d.¹

¹ See application text, page 17, ln. 5-25

Figs. 3A-3E, and Figs. 4A-4E show front views of exemplary embodiments of the radiation image storage panel. Therein, as shown, the radiation image storage panel has an asymmetric shape with respect to a center axis 51 extending in an anterior-posterior direction.²

The grounds of rejection in item 1 of the present Office Action allege that Sakuma discloses all the limitations of independent claim 1, except for the limitation that the radiation image storage panel comprises a transparent substrate and a stimutable phosphor layer overlaid on a front surface side of the transparent substrate. However, according to the grounds of rejection, the Hosoi reference teaches a stimutable phosphor layer overlaid on a front surface side of a transparent substrate.

Fig. 3 of the Sakuma reference shows plan views of films 3, 5, and 7 for use in a one-sided direct radiography system, and plan views of cassettes 4, 6, and 8 for use in the film.³

Therein, a step-shaped notch is provided to the left edge of the film 3, on the surface of which an emulsion is coated; and cassette 4 is used in the film, wherein the shape of the cassette 4 is actually the same as that of the film.⁴

² See application text, page 22, ln. 13-20

³ See Sakuma reference, col. 2, ln. 44-48

⁴ See Sakuma reference, col. 2, ln. 49-52

A semicircular notch is provided to the left edge of the film 5, and a notch of the same shape is provided in the cassette 6. A triangle-shaped notch is provided to the left edge of the film 7, and a notch of the same shape is provided in the cassette 8.⁵

Therein, the emulsion coated on the surface of the film is a photosensitive silver halide emulsion.⁶

Hosoi teaches with reference to Fig. 5, cited in the grounds of rejection, that a line sensor 3 detects a radiation image from a stimuable phosphor sheet 1, which comprises a transparent substrate 1A and a stimuable phosphor layer 1B.⁷

However, nowhere in the Hosoi reference is there any teaching or suggestion to use a phosphor sheet as taught therein (namely, e.g., the phosphor sheet 1 having the transparent substrate 1A and the stimuable phosphor layer 1B) in a system as disclosed in Sakuma, in which the film, e.g., the film 3, 5, and 7, has a step-shaped notch, a semicircular notch, and a triangle-shaped notch, respectively, and in which the film can be arranged in a cassette having a corresponding shape. In fact, as clearly evidenced by Fig. 1 of the Hosoi reference, the stimuable phosphor sheet 1 does not have any notches at all.

⁵ See Sakuma reference, col. 2, ln. 53-57

⁶ See Sakuma reference, col. 1, ln. 52-59; col. 3, ln. 32-36; col. 6, ln. 34-39

⁷ See Hosoi reference, col. 6, ln. 14-17

By the same token, as noted above, the Sakuma reference expressly teaches that the emulsion coated on the surface of Sakuma's film is a photosensitive silver halide emulsion. There is, however, no teaching or suggestion in the Sakuma reference that the emulsion can be a stimuable phosphor layer as taught in Hosoi.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that it is not apparent how or why a person skilled in the art would have been motivated to combine the teachings of Sakuma with the teachings of Hosoi.

Regarding the Verbeke reference, the grounds of rejection state that it is known in the art that, for radiography, a radiation image storage panel offers the advantages of re-usability and better image resolution at lower dosages for a patient and that typically the radiation image storage panel is used within conventional X-ray photography cassettes.

However, Applicants submit that these advantages allegedly taught in Verbeke still do not explain how or why a person skilled in the art would have been motivated to use Hosoi's stimuable phosphor sheet 1, which does not have any notches at all, in Sakuma's system, which employs a film having a step-shaped notch, a semicircular notch, or a triangle-shaped notch, and having an emulsion that is made of a photosensitive silver halide.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over the prior art made of record. The dependent claims are patentable at least by virtue of dependency from claim 1.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
US Appln. No. 09/804,080

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

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